

House Resolution 1219

By: Representatives Benfield of the 85th, Morgan of the 39th, Henson of the 87th, Drenner of the 86th, Bell of the 58th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Georgia Department of Education and all school systems in Georgia to safeguard
2 the rights of children under the age of 17 from military recruitment and to implement basic
3 safeguards for the recruitment of 17-year-olds; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, in 2002 the United States Senate ratified the *Optional Protocol to the*
5 *Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict*,
6 which requires that each state party "deposit a binding declaration upon ratification of or
7 accession to the present Protocol that sets forth the minimum age at which it will permit
8 voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces and a description of the safeguards it has
9 adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced"; and

10 WHEREAS, at ratification, the United States entered a binding declaration that set age 17
11 as the absolute minimum age for military recruitment; and

12 WHEREAS, the Optional Protocol mandates that state parties permit voluntary recruitment
13 of children younger than 18 only on the conditions that such recruitment is "genuinely
14 voluntary" and is "carried out with the informed consent of the person's parents or legal
15 guardians," in addition to requiring that such recruited individuals be "fully informed of the
16 duties involved in such military service" and "provide reliable proof of age prior to
17 acceptance" into the military; and

18 WHEREAS, the prevailing international standard is to prohibit the voluntary recruitment of
19 persons under the age of 18 into the military, as evidenced by 89 of 128 state parties to the
20 Optional Protocol declaring 18 as the minimum age for recruitment and as evidenced by the
21 concluding observations and recommendations of the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the
22 Child, a body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the
23 Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols; and

24 WHEREAS, the Optional Protocol recognizes that children younger than 18 are "entitled to
25 special protection"; and

26 WHEREAS, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has called upon the United States to
27 refrain from using the educational system to promote the military or military-type training
28 for children, and has also called upon the United States not to permit military recruiting
29 which targets racial and ethnic minorities and children of low-income families and other
30 vulnerable socio-economic groups, as such activities run counter to the object and purpose
31 of the Optional Protocol; and

32 WHEREAS, according to the No Child Left Behind Act, high schools must disclose the
33 contact information for juniors and seniors, including students under 17 years of age, to
34 military recruiters or risk losing federal aid and this information may be forwarded to the
35 military without the knowledge or consent of the parents; and

36 WHEREAS, while parents and students may sign and submit a form requesting that their
37 contact information be withheld from military recruiters, many Georgia schools do not make
38 the exemption forms or information about the exemption forms readily available to high
39 school students and their parents; and

40 WHEREAS, some Georgia high schools encourage students, including students under 17
41 years of age, to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, a military placement
42 exam that serves as a military recruiting tool; and

43 WHEREAS, the United States military continues to engage in other tactics designed to
44 recruit students under the age of 17, despite the United States' binding declaration to only
45 recruit persons 17 years of age and older.

46 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
47 the members of this body urge the Georgia Department of Education and all school systems
48 within the State of Georgia to:

- 49 (1) Cease all current and future programs and activities designed to recruit children under
50 the age of 17, including but not limited to military schools and Armed Services
51 Vocational Aptitude Battery testing;
- 52 (2) When instituting military-related programs and activities such as military schools and
53 Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery testing for children ages 17 or older,
54 Georgia schools do so only upon written consent from participating students' parents or

55 legal guardians obtained after fully informing the students and their parents or legal
56 guardians about the military nature of the programs or activities, the fact that participation
57 in such is completely voluntary, and the duties generally involved in military service; and
58 (3) Begin to actively provide students and parents with exemption forms and information
59 regarding exemption forms that would prohibit the students' schools from disclosing
60 students' records to military recruiters as required by the No Child Left Behind Act.

61 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
62 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the public and the press and
63 to the State School Superintendent with a request to distribute copies of this resolution to all
64 school systems in this state.